

# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

## **SAU 55 HAMPSTEAD SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Dr. Douglas B. McDonald, Superintendent  
Dr. Mark Masterson, Assistant Superintendent  
Jane Beaudin, Special Ed. Director**

**Final Report  
April 2, 2001**

**Visit Conducted on:  
February 13-14, 2001**

### **Team Members:**

Jane Bergeron-Beaulieu, Chairperson  
Donna Bolian, Special Education Director  
Susan Dietz, LD Specialist  
Susan Izard, NH Dept. of Education Consultant  
Mary Lane, NH Dept. of Education Consultant  
Mary Lyons, Special Ed. Coordinator  
Jane Murray, Special Educator  
Sharon O'Brien, Occupational Therapist  
Deborah Snow-Major, Child Find Facilitator

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Students with Disabilities  
  
(Commendations, Citations and Suggestions for each school)

Note: *It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.*

# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

## **SAU 55 Hampstead School District**

### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted in the Hampstead School District comprised of the following schools: TEECH (Transdisciplinary Early Education Classroom), Hampstead Central School, Hampstead Middle School and Pinkerton Academy in Derry NH. The visiting team met on February 13-14, 2001 in order to review the status of special education services provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff, analysis of SPEDIS data and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the Special Education Director, Assistant Superintendent, building principals, regular and special education teachers, related service personnel and administrators as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via telephone. Throughout the visit, the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report that you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that no citations of noncompliance to the Standards were found in that particular area.

### **II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE:** *Conducted on February 8, 1995*

As a result of visits to all programs in the Hampstead School District, review of policies and procedures and interviews with staff, administrators, and parents, the visiting team determined that the district has pursued ongoing educational improvements in all areas previously noted in need of correction.

Each school building in Hampstead continue to deal with space constraints, although it should be noted that facility problems do not seem to be have a negative impact on the programming provided to students. This review team, as in the previous visits, a creative use of the spaces available for instructional purposes. While this is a school wide issue at both Hampstead Central School and the Hampstead Middle School, it does have a direct correlation to implementing Individual Education Plans for students with educational disabilities. The visiting team supports the efforts of the school distinct as they consider future building plans to meet the growing student enrollment figures. For this reason it was determined this issue is still in process of being addressed.

Overall, the Hampstead School District can be proud that they have addressed most all issues of noncompliance outlined in the previous report. The visiting team would like to recognize all staff and administrators within the school district for their dedication and for the provision of quality programming within each of the schools.

### **III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

It was clear to the visiting team that the delivery of special education services to students within the Hampstead School District is an integral part of the overall programming in each school. The team agreed there is a high level of professionalism and well designed instruction throughout the district. Both Hampstead schools provide a supportive enthusiastic atmosphere for the provision of services for all students in the least restrictive environment. This enthusiasm and support is fostered throughout the district by faculty, administration, support service personnel, secretarial staff and parents. In many ways, it is clear that the district is working hard to offer a continuum of program options to all children. Children with disabilities are engaged in all aspects of school life, including access to the general curriculum, extra curricula activities and sports. There were no significant patterns of noncompliance within the district. For the most part, the individual areas found to be in need of correction do not imply a system wide concern.

The district is commended for the implementation of inclusionary practices. Children are provided with the supports they need in order to remain with typical peers in the regular education setting. The continuum of services presently available to students in the Hampstead schools is an effective way to provide for the wide range of student's educational needs. The present number of students placed out of district is quite low and the district is recognized for the intensive supports available to all children. While inclusionary practices are first and foremost in Hampstead, staff and administration also recognize that some children may need alternative instruction during certain times and these services and individual programs are designed accordingly.

While the visiting team recognizes and praises the many efforts of the Hampstead School District, there were two areas of concern raised by the visiting team. The first is the problem of crowded conditions within both schools. The team observed learning environments that did not provide adequate space for provision of educational services. Specifically, there were related service providers located in very small office space with little to no air circulation. At this time, the facilities are at capacity and modular classrooms are being utilized to address the need for additional instructional space. It was the visiting team's opinion there was often a lack of adequate space to accommodate the needs and learning activities of the students enrolled. Serious consideration needs to be given to addressing the "space crunch" at both schools in the Hampstead School District.

The second issue that surfaced was related to least restrictive environment and access to equal educational opportunities for Hampstead students with disabilities who are currently enrolled at Pinkerton Academy. Specifically, the visiting team agreed there was insufficient evidence that students with disabilities enrolled at Pinkerton Academy are consistently provided with equal educational opportunities in all aspects of the schools curriculum, and in some cases the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. The practice of excluding some students with disabilities from the opportunity of completing a course of studies leading to a high school diploma is questionable and will require further clarification.

In summary, the Hampstead School District demonstrates a very high level of educational support for all students. The administrative leadership is commended for the establishment of high standards and a clear educational vision and philosophy. School staff express pride in their schools and in their individual work. There is an impressive atmosphere of professionalism and respect throughout the district. Students appear happy and engaged in their learning and parents report satisfaction with educational programming. The district has set high educational standards and the results are seen throughout each school.

#### **IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: DISTRICT-WIDE**

##### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- There is a spirit of teamwork, collaboration and open lines of communication among all staff.
- The atmosphere in both of the Hampstead Schools encourages the provision of services in the least restrictive environment.
- The SAU is commended for the extensive effort put forth to develop general curriculum aligned with the NH Curriculum Frameworks.
- Staff is commended for work begun in developing IEP's that reflect the general education curriculum.
- Staff and administration in each school were repeatedly described as skilled, highly motivated and dedicated to the teaching/learning process
- The parents of the Hampstead School District are commended for their continued support and active involvement in the education of all students.
- The district is commended for the high educational standards apparent in both schools.
- The district Special Education Manual is comprehensive and well designed.
- The district demonstrates a very professional and child centered atmosphere.
- The district is commended for its well-maintained buildings and for working hard to address the crowded conditions in each school.

##### **CITATIONS:**

See individual school summaries

##### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- The school district needs to continue to pursue solutions to the overcrowding of facilities.
- The school district might want to consider utilizing technology to streamline the special education paperwork process (i.e. computerized IEPs, refined forms available via technology, etc.)

<b>TEECH (Transdisciplinary Early Education Classroom)</b>
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**# Of Files Reviewed:** 3 Files

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- Regular education environment is offered for all preschoolers enrolled in TEECH.
- Staff maintain frequent communication with parents.
- Trans-disciplinary model is working well to meet student needs.
- Staff are commended for consultations with paraprofessionals before school begins.
- The environment within the program is child centered and designed to meet the needs of all students.
- The model of team teaching between regular and special education staff is exemplary.
- Therapists work in the classrooms and integrate therapy into the program.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 109.04 3 files: lacked evidence that procedural safeguards are provided with all invitations to  
CFR300.504(a)(2) IEP meetings.

Ed. 1109.01(k) 3 files: IEP's lacked statement of parties assuming financial responsibility.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- IEPs could be more specific regarding expectations in regular education class and how disability interferes with progress in the general curriculum.
- The TEECH Program staff might want to consider building time into their schedules to consult with paraprofessionals.

## HAMPSTEAD CENTRAL SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Inclusion 2) Learning Center 3) Regular Ed. Setting

**# Of Files Reviewed:** 3 Files

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- Staff at the school were consistently described as competent, caring and very supportive of each other and the students.
- Programs are well supplied with ample equipment and instructional materials.
- Students with disabilities appear to be included in all aspects of school life.
- Student files were well organized and contained all essential information.
- Transition of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students to the middle school is very well planned.

### **CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.02(b) 3 files: lacked immediate written notice to parent upon referral and prior to any.  
CFR300.504(a)(1) evaluation.

Ed. 1109.04 3 files: lacked evidence that procedural safeguards were given at each notice of meeting.  
CFR300.504(a)(2)

Ed. 1109.01(a) 2 files: although implied, two IEPs lacked present levels of performance.  
CFR300.347(a)(1)

Ed. 1109.01 2 files: IEP's lacked statement of how disability affects involvement in the general  
CFR300.347(a)(1)i curriculum.

Ed. 1109.01(b) 1 file: IEP lacked measurable annual goals.  
CFR300.347(2)

Ed. 1109.01(d) 1 file: IEP did not specify expectation of regular class participation (was implied but not specifically stated).

Ed. 1109.06 Facilities and Location: there is no handicapped accessible bathroom at the Hampstead Central School. Students who are wheelchair bound or have physical disabilities must be assisted when using bathroom facilities.

CFR300.34(a)(4) 2 files: IEP's lacked statement indicating the extent to which the student will not participate with peers.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- The school may want to consider including a behavior specialist on staff.

## HAMPSTEAD MIDDLE SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Inclusion 2) Learning Center 3) Self Contained

**# Of Files Reviewed:** 3 Files

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- The atmosphere at the school is child and staff centered.
- Inclusion is modeled and supported by the entire school community.
- All staff take responsibility for the education of all students.
- Parental involvement and support is evident throughout the school.
- Staff appear to work well as a team.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 1109.01 IEP's lacked evidence of progress in general curriculum. IEP needs to state amount of time and reasons why.

Ed. 1109.04 Procedural safeguards need to be sent to parents with invitations to all meetings.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Professional development opportunities should be made available to paraprofessionals.
- Options need to be explored to ensure there is adequate and appropriate space for administration of special education assessments.



## PINKERTON ACADEMY

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) ACT 2) Resource Room 3) C-Modified

**# Of Files Reviewed:** 3 Files

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- Paraprofessionals are involved in IEP meetings and have input into IEP development.
- Student files were well organized.
- Case managers were will informed regarding student needs and programs.
- Students are involved in transition planning.
- There is good transition planning between Hampstead to Pinkerton, to employers or higher education. Good data exists on where students are going after high school.
- Students are offered support and assistance with college applications.
- Tutorial classes was positive and task oriented. Students were complimentary of services available.
- Computers are in abundance and are available in resource tutorial settings.

### **CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

- Ed. 1107.03(c) 1 file: contained only anecdotal records rather than a variety of assessment tools. This student was identified as MR and adaptive behavioral checklist would have been appropriate.
- Ed. 1107.05  
Ed. 1107.07 1 file: lacked evidence of qualified examiner and a teacher certified in the area of suspected disability at evaluation meeting.
- Ed. 1113.01 1 file: lacked evidence of a vocational evaluation. Student is currently age 17 1/2 and is in a work to learn program in the community. Files suggest other suggest other students received evaluations at age 14 or 15.
- Ed. 1109.01(b) 3 files: lacked annual goals written in measurable terms on IEP.
- .Ed. 1109.01(a) 3 files: IEPs lacked evidence of students' involvement in the general curriculum.
- Ed. 1109.03 3 files: Transition plans did not outline participation of other agencies.
- Ed. 1115.06 1 file: no LRE continuum present. IEP indicated more inclusion than was actually occurring.
- Ed. 1115.06  
Ed. 1119.06 The Hampstead School District in collaboration with Pinkerton Academy must ensure that least restrictive environment requirements are met and that students with disabilities are placed in programs that meet requirements of Ed. 1119.06.
- Ed. 1119.08 The Hampstead School District and Pinkerton Academy must ensure that all students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to complete a course of study leading to a high school diploma.
- Ed. 1119.03 The Hampstead School District must work with Pinkerton Academy to ensure students with disabilities have full access to the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible.

**SUGGESTIONS:** None

## OUT OF DISTRICT FILES

**NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 FILES

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- The school district maintains a strong line of communication with private schools.
- There is a Hampstead district staff member in addition to the LEA representative at most meetings.
- The district puts forth much effort to exhaust all resources before placing students out of district.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 1109.11 1 file: IEP lacked current progress reports.

Ed. 1109.04 1 file: procedural safeguards are not sent with each notice of IEP meeting.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

None

# **ADDENDUM**

## **JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM**

*SAU 55*

*Hampstead School District*

**Student File Review**

**Case Study Document**

**Reimbursement Claim Form**

**Case Study Addendum Form**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADDENDUM</b> <b>JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</b></p>
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**SAU 55**  
**Hampstead School District**

**NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED:**        3 FILES

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- The school district appears to have a good working relationship and an open line of communication with the court system.
- Once a student has been court ordered to a placement, the school district closely monitors the educational programming of the child.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

- Ed. 1107.02(d)        1 file: lacked written permission for most recent evaluation.
- Ed. 1107.08(a)(2)    1 file: lacked classroom observation for LD student.
- Ed. 1123.05        3 files: lacked evidence that parental rights are provided with each notice of IEP meeting.
- Ed. 1123.03        1 file: not able to locate copy of written prior notice.
- Ed. 1123.04(a)(10)   1 file: lacked record of disclosure.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- The school district needs to obtain daily student schedules that outline participation in F.A.P.E.